

*Application No. 10/052160*AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A universal snap-fit spacer system, comprising:

a fastener member, comprising:

a body portion;

a resilient portion, wherein said resilient portion is movable with respect to
said body portion; and

a locking assembly, wherein said resilient portion biases said locking
assembly into a first position;

a spacer element, comprising:

an interior bore;

a plurality of recesses formed in said interior bore, wherein said locking
assembly of said fastener member may be received in any one of a number of said
plurality of recesses to prevent said fastener member from being withdrawn from said
spacer element.

2. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said locking
assembly is in said first position when said locking assembly is received in one of said
plurality of recesses.

3. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein in said first
position a distance across said locking assembly is equal to a first amount.

4. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein in a second
position a distance across said locking assembly is equal to a second amount, and wherein
said second amount is about equal to a diameter of said interior bore.

Application No. 10/052160

5. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said locking assembly comprises:

at least a first camming surface; and
at least a first locking surface.

6. (Original) The system of Claim 5, wherein at least a first recess comprises:

a tapered surface; and
a latching surface.

7. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein a latching surface of a first of said recesses is a first distance from a latching surface of a second of said recesses, wherein said fastener member comprises a pair of locking assemblies, and wherein a distance between a locking surface of a first of said locking assemblies and a locking surface of a second of said locking assemblies is a distance equal to an integer multiple of said first distance.

8. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 6, wherein said spacer element further comprises a plurality of grooves formed in an exterior of said spacer element, and wherein at least a first of said grooves is formed in a plane corresponding to a plane of a latching surface of one of said recesses.

9. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 1, A universal snap-fit spacer system, comprising:

a fastener member, comprising:

a body portion;

Application No. 10/052160

at least two resilient portions, wherein said resilient portions comprise stem members, and wherein said fastener member further comprises a gap formed between said stem members; and

a locking assembly, wherein said resilient portion biases said locking assembly into a first position;

a spacer element, comprising:

an interior bore;

a plurality of recesses formed in said interior bore, wherein said locking assembly of said fastener member may be received in any one of a number of said plurality of recesses to prevent said fastener member from being withdrawn from said spacer element.

10. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said spacer member further comprises a plurality of depth control holes, wherein a depth control rod can be inserted in one of said depth control holes to prevent the fastener member from being inserted into said spacer member past a predetermined depth.

11. (Previously Presented) A method for interconnecting objects, comprising: interconnecting a first snap fit fastener member to a first object, wherein said first snap fit fastener member has substantially identical first and second ends;

interconnecting said first snap fit fastener member to a spacer element;

interconnecting a second snap fit fastener member to a second object, wherein said second snap fit fastener member has substantially identical first and second ends;

interconnecting said second snap fit fastener member to said spacer element, wherein said first and second objects are fastened to one another, wherein each of said first and second objects are in contact with said spacer element, and wherein said first

Application No. 10/052160

snap fit fastener member is substantially identical to said second snap fit fastener member.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising: interconnecting said second snap fit fastener member to a second spacer element; interconnecting a third snap fit fastener member to a third object; interconnecting said third snap fit fastener member to said second spacer element, wherein said first, second, and third objects are fastened to one another.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein said first and second objects comprise first and second circuit boards respectively.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein said first circuit board is a first thickness, and wherein said second circuit board is a second thickness.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein said spacer element comprises a plurality of recesses, wherein said fastener members comprise at least a first fastener assembly, wherein said first fastener member engages a recess at a first distance from a first end of said spacer element.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein said second member engages a recess at a second distance from a second end of said spacer element, and wherein said first and second objects are different thicknesses.

17. (Previously Presented) A system for stacking circuit boards, comprising: a first fastener member;

Application No. 10/052160

a first spacer element comprising an interior bore and a plurality of interior recesses;

a first circuit board, wherein a first locking assembly at a first end of said first fastener member is snap fit to said first circuit board and a second locking assembly at a second end of said first fastener member is snap fit to said first spacer element, wherein said first circuit board is held between said first locking assembly of said first fastener member and a first end of said spacer element;

a second fastener member;

a second circuit board, wherein a first locking assembly at a first end of said second fastener member is snap fit to said first circuit board and a second locking assembly at a second end of said second fastener member is snap fit to said first spacer element, and wherein said first circuit board is in a stacked relationship with said second circuit board.

18. (Original) The system of Claim 17, wherein said first circuit board is a first thickness, and wherein said second locking assembly at a second end of said first fastener member is engaged with a first recess of said first spacer element located a first distance from said first end of said first spacer element.

19. (Original) The system of Claim 18, wherein said second circuit board is a second thickness, and wherein said second locking assembly at a second end of said second fastener member is engaged with a second recess of said first spacer element located a second distance from said second end of said first spacer element.

20. (Original) The system of Claim 17, wherein said second circuit board is held between said first locking assembly of said second fastener member and a second end of said first spacer element

Application No. 10/052160

21. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 17, further comprising:
a second spacer element, wherein said second locking assembly at a second end of
said second fastener member is snap fit to said second spacer element, wherein said
second circuit board is held between a second end of said first spacer element and a first
end of said second spacer element;
a third fastener member;
a third circuit board, wherein a first locking assembly at a first end of said third
fastener member is snap fit to said third circuit board and a second locking assembly at a
second end of said third fastener member is snap fit to said second spacer element,
wherein said third circuit board is held between said first locking assembly of said third
fastener member and a second end of said second spacer element.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said plurality of
recesses are axially aligned with one another.